

PSGHS NEWS

Premium Sheep and Goat Health Schemes

2022 Issue



- 2 Scrapie Qualifying Scheme
- 2 Useful Links
- 3 Advisory Board
- 4 Animal Health and Welfare Pathway - England
- 5 Top Tips to Minimise the Need for Antibiotic Treatment at Lambing Time
- 5 PSGHS Monitoring Schemes
- 6 Member Profile Philip Ormerod
- 7 Membership Update
- 8 Events



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PSGHS NEWS



Welcome to the 2022 edition of **PSGHS News**. We hope that lambing has been or will be a success and we wish you well with your enterprises as you start to plan for the future! Farming is experiencing a rapid transition. There will be a greater focus on rewarding good health and welfare and monitoring endemic disease for the foreseeable future. This will mean that health schemes and health planning will be more important than ever before. SRUC has been gearing up to support livestock keepers to farm more sustainably, an example of this is the carbon calculator 'Agrecalc'. Improving and maintaining livestock health is a vital part of sustainable livestock farming and our PSGHS members will be leading the way! We hope that you find some useful information to help you manage the health status of your animals and we look forward to finally meeting you face to face at events over the coming year. **Alison Braddock**

Scrapie Qualifying Scheme

Scrapie Qualifying status is a new temporary status within the Great Britain Scrapie Monitored Scheme (SMS), which was available to apply for on or before 31st December 2021. There are currently 305 members with Scrapie Qualifying status.

Animals from flocks with Scrapie Qualifying status are not Scrapie Monitored as defined in the Scrapie Monitoring Scheme rules, but they are eligible for export to Northern Ireland under a limited derogation within the relevant EU Regulations. Flock owners/keepers must undertake to comply with SMS rules for the next three years after which they will progress to SMS (Controlled Risk) status.

You can download the Scrapie Qualifying notes for further details about Qualifying status. (www.bit.ly/SQS_Notes)

Additional details on the process for moving breeding sheep and goats from GB to NI are available from APHA and Daera.

Useful Links

PSGHS Monitoring Schemes (www.bit.ly/PSGHS_Monitoring)

Johne's Disease Accreditation (www.bit.ly/PSGHS_Johnes)

Scrapie Monitoring Scheme (www.bit.ly/PSGHS_Scrapie)

MV/CAE Accreditation Scheme (www.bit.ly/PSGHS_MV_CAE)

www.facebook.com/SRUCVets @SRUCVets



Mental Health Support

Positive test results or disease outbreaks have the potential to be a stressful event for livestock owners. You can access practical advice, guidance and support, from money matters to mental health. The link provides details of organisations who can help in Scotland, England and Wales.

www.bit.ly/AHDB_MentalHealth

Advisory Board

Andy Barr

Andy Barr recently stepped down from the PSGHS Advisory Group after eight years of being a member, coinciding with his retirement as a director of the Texel Sheep Society.

Andy's flock on his farm near Biggar in South Lanarkshire is one of the oldest Texel flocks in the UK. Andy's father was one of the four original importers of the breed, and their flock holds the record for the first pure Texel lamb born in Britain.

Andy's industry support goes much further than board level participation! He and his wife have supported a young entrant, Laura Hinnekens to get a foothold into farming. Laura now owns 350 North Country Cheviots put to a traditional Bluefaced Leicester ram and 100 Cheviot Mules put to home bred Texel rams and they are all kept at Andy's Parkhouse holding.

SRUC Veterinary Services would like to thank Andy for all his enthusiasm and expertise over the years. We will miss his friendly face but look forward to catching up with him when out and about at events!

Jeff Aiken

Taking the reigns from Andy for the representation of the Texel society in the advisory group is Jeff Aiken. As vice chairman and vice president of the society and having worked with the Texel breed since 2000, we look forward to his expertise being contributed to our discussions.

Jeff has managed the Procters and Tatham Hall Texel flocks in Lancashire since 2009. He aims to breed pedigree Texel sheep with good legs/feet, conformation and character for both the pedigree and commercial markets.

Jeff added that he is looking forward to working with the advisory group to ensure the MV accreditation scheme remains fit for purpose and relevant to industry.

"MV is a disease no-one wants to see in their flock and PSGHS plays a key role in minimising the risk MV poses to the industry."

"As the most influential breed in the UK, accounting for 27.2% of all rams used, the Texel breed fully supports MV Accreditation and I am keen to explore other ways of minimising the potential for MV transmission across the wider industry and the role PSGHS can play in that," explained Jeff.

Current chairman elect of the Texel Sheep Society, Jeff said keeping the scheme affordable and easy to implement on farm was vital to maximising uptake and minimising the risk MV posed to the industry. "While the scheme is largely targeted at pedigree flocks, its influence extends throughout the sheep sector and it has to be hoped that influence can be grown if we are to reduce the impact of MV."



Jennifer and Jeff Aiken. Photo credit Becki Dakin.



Left to right: Andy Barr, Andy's wife Lyn, Laura Hinnekens, Laura's partner Euan.



Animal Health and Welfare Pathway – England

Defra's Animal Health and Welfare Pathway aims to involve farmers' own vets and for them to be at the heart of delivery.

The programme is set to start in Spring 2022, with the Review being the first step. The Review is a fully-funded vet visit which farmers will receive on a yearly basis. Farmers' own vets will carry out diagnostic testing and provide bespoke advice on management to improve the health and welfare of their animals.

Farms that have had their review will also be signposted to other financial support to improve health and welfare. This includes help to control endemic disease in their herd or flock; invest in sustainable approaches that mitigate impact on the environment; or improve the environments in which animals live so they live a good life by investing in higher welfare.

Having completed this first step, farmers will continue along the Pathway supported by Animal Health and Welfare grants which will be launched later in 2022.

The offer will initially be available for all commercial cattle, pig and sheep farmers in England who are currently eligible for the Basic Payment Scheme. The long-term aim is to engage with all farms, thereby reducing the risk of re-infection to those who have forged ahead with the programme. This is for all livestock farmers. Farmers' own vets will work with them on an individual farm basis and there will be a format that covers the health and welfare needs for all types of farm.

Defra believes that a higher health national flock or herd will have a reduced need for veterinary medicines, reducing the effect on the environment and underpinning the country's

international reputation for good health and welfare and bolstering export opportunities.

The date for applications opening will be published on Defra's blog (www.bit.ly/DefraBlog), so be sure to subscribe to keep up to date.

For sheep specifically the Pathway's priorities are to:

- **Provide a tailored health screening to address a range of endemic diseases, estimated to cost the sector around £85 million per year – initially this will focus on internal and external parasites (and associated anthelmintic efficacy), mastitis, 'iceberg' diseases and those inducing abortion**
- **Reduce lameness as it is one of the most common signs of ill health and discomfort among sheep, affecting animals' mobility, productivity and longevity**
- **Improve ewe sustainability, optimising body condition so that ewes are less susceptible to disease, produce better quality milk and can rear a greater number of healthier lambs**
- **Improve pain management during castration and tail docking. Defra wants to support the licensing and uptake of pain relief to reduce the impact of these procedures**

www.bit.ly/AHW_Pathway

We will update our members with information about Scotland and Wales as soon as possible!

Top tips to minimise the need for antibiotic treatment at lambing time

Antibiotic use on sheep farms increases significantly around lambing time, especially in indoor flocks. Fiona Crowden SRUC Veterinary Investigation Officer, shares top tips on how sheep farmers can reduce antibiotic usage.

- **Vaccination to prevent EAE is more effective than the routine use of oxytetracycline antibiotics. SRUC Veterinary Services can screen blood samples or test samples from aborted ewes to screen for EAE on your farm.**
- **Wear gloves or thoroughly clean your hands when assisting lambing to prevent the need for routine antibiotics**
- **Implement a clear treatment plan for lambing in consultation with your vet.**
- **If you are reaching for an antibiotic bottle to treat a sick ewe, always ensure you are using the 4 D's.**
- **Correct Drug for a known Disease.**
- **Used at the right Dose.**
- **Correctly Delivered or applied.**

SRUC Veterinary Services works with farmers and vets to identify bacterial pathogens and produce antibiotic sensitivity profiles, useful on farm for targeted treatment but this also form part of the national monitoring programme for patterns of antimicrobial resistance.

- **Provide lambs with good quality colostrum in sufficient quantity in a hygienic environment to prevent watery mouth.**



Lambs need to ingest sufficient colostrum to provide a defence against bacteria in the environment. A blood sample from a few lambs at the start of lambing, using a ZST test, can provide reassurance that your lambs are getting the colostrum they need.

- **Quality colostrum in ewes depends on good genetics, but also an ideal body condition with their energy and protein needs in late pregnancy having been met.**

SRUC Veterinary Services provide cost effective laboratory testing to evaluate the late pregnancy ration by analysis of blood samples taken 3–4 weeks prior to lambing for beta hydroxybutyrate (BOHB) and urea, giving farmers time to alter the ration if required prior to lambing.

The most important thing when it comes to the end of lambing, is to take time to reflect and plan improvements alongside your vet, consultant or nutritionist for the year to come.

Fiona Crowden – Veterinary Investigation Officer, SRUC Disease Surveillance Centre, Aberdeen

PSGHS Monitoring Schemes

The monitoring schemes were launched in September 2020 to provide another tier of scheme for sheep and goat keepers that could not meet the full requirements of the accreditation schemes. The biosecurity protocols and cost of testing involved with the accreditation schemes have presented a barrier to some flocks/herds depending on their size and other circumstances and, although the monitoring scheme is a lower level of assurance, it is still a significant step in terms of tackling endemic diseases that may be affecting the performance of your livestock.

Since launching, the monitoring schemes now have membership covering the majority of the UK, with members ranging from Devon to Orkney. A wide range of breeds are represented, including Charollais, Lleyn, Shetlands, Exlanas, Easy Care, mules and many other sheep breeds which are monitoring for MV and/or Johne's Disease, as well as Boer, Saanen and Anglo-Nubian goat herds which are monitoring for CAE or Johne's Disease.

More info on the scheme can be found on www.bit.ly/PSGHS_Monitoring.





Philip Ormerod

Pasture House Farm, West Marton, Nr Skipton, North Yorkshire

Having started farming dairy cattle in 1987 as a first-generation farmer, Philip Ormerod now runs a number of livestock enterprises and has secured a sustainable business for his children to inherit.

Inspired to get into agriculture by his uncles, Philip began on a county council holding, moving to his current farm in 2002. The holding covers a total of 300 acres, 100 of which is whole crop with the remainder being comprised of grassland. While they no longer keep dairy cattle, the farm is now home to a large herd of milking goats, as well as a flock of 230 north country mules and about 80 dairy-cross store cattle.

Philip decided to switch from dairy cattle to goats because he had two sons due to leave agricultural college and not enough scope to increase the existing dairy operation, he wanted

to put something in place so that they could work alongside him on the farm. In 2006 the Ormerod's invested in a milking goat herd of 300, with the cattle milk price low at the time and the more hands-on approach needed for the goats it was the perfect switch with the extra help Philip's sons were able to provide. Sticking to the Saanen-Toggenburg hybrid that they started with, favoured for their high milk yields, they grew the herd to 1000 milking goats and 600 youngstock by 2011.

All replacements are bred from the Ormerod's herd, as well as all breeding males being



homebred, using AI to introduce new genetics. While females start milking at 12 months old, males that aren't to be kept for breeding go for slaughter at 6 months of age, with the majority going through Cabrito – an online and wholesale goat meat business for which Philip is a director. The Ormerod's are now planning to sell more breeding stock, with some breeding males having been sold in the UK in recent years, but the aim is to sell both males and females for breeding internationally.

About four years ago the herd's milk yield began to decrease, soon followed by clinical signs of CAE including arthritic lameness. **"Our vet is on farm at least once a week for disbudding kids, so we always try to be proactive and run any other issues we have past them as they come up,"** comments Philip, "fortunately the vet was quick to identify that CAE was a possible cause of the drop in yield and we started testing straight away."

Having been in the Scrapie Monitoring Scheme for over 6 years at that point, Philip decided to join SRUC's CAE accreditation scheme to tackle the outbreak in the herd. However, two years ago the difficult decision was made to cull the entire herd.

The herd is now back to the numbers prior to the outbreak, having been restocked entirely from CAE accredited goats. Due to their commitment to the Saanen-Toggenburg hybrid, sourcing enough new animals was a challenge but one that Philip was determined to achieve – not only to protect the ongoing health of the herd, but to also allow them to export to countries where accreditation for CAE is mandatory.

As well as joining the health schemes, Philip's overall aim is to breed robust goats with a genetic propensity for high health and lower cell counts for reduced risk of mastitis. As well as taking proactive steps in terms of health, they have also invested in a rotary parlour and a robotic feeder to improve the efficiency of the dairy operation.

Philip is also a member of livestock and grassland discussion groups, as well as being a board member of the milking goat association, highlighting his dedication to progression within the industry.

When asked about what message he would give to other farmers, and especially the younger generation Philip commented:

"Chronic disease is a drag on profitability and increases the carbon footprint of the food we produce. The one thing I have learnt is that money spent on disease surveillance and control is money well spent."

www.milkinggoat.org.uk
www.cabrito.co.uk

Membership Update

As the membership of PSGHS continues to grow we thought this would be a good chance to provide an update with some figures on how many members we have in each scheme and where they are located. The figures below are correct as of the start of March 2022.

	Members	Flocks/ Herds
England	1850	2210
Scotland	1015	1192
Wales	539	615
Total	3404	4017

	Total Flocks/ Herds	Fully Accredited
MV	3239	2722
CAE	225	145
EAE	186	133
SMS	166	98
Johne's	201	65

Members may have more than one flock or herd. These are counted separately if they are in more than one scheme (i.e. the same sheep flock is in both the MV and SMS schemes), or some members may have a commercial and pedigree flock/herd that they run separately, or separate flocks of different breeds.

The total membership of each scheme is greater than the number that are fully accredited due to a number of flocks that are either still in the process of gaining accreditation (for example doing qualifying tests) or have lost their accredited status and are trying to regain it.

The top ten most popular breeds in PSGHS are listed below, ranked by the number of flocks keeping that breed.

Breed	Flocks
Texel	1161
Suffolk	635
Beltex	455
Lleyn	370
Blue Texel	350
Zwartbles	341
Charollais	327
Mules	271
Dutch Spotted	191
Hampshire Down	141

Events

Although nearly all of the shows and events that we would normally exhibit at were cancelled in 2020 and 2021 due to the pandemic, we were able to attend the Great Yorkshire Show, the Westmorland County Show, Borderway Agri-Expo in Carlisle and AgriFest South West in Exeter. It was great to be out and about again, especially to be able to meet so many of our members and others interested in our health schemes.

We hope to be able to return to our full schedule of events this year, which (allowing for cancellations) will be as listed below. We look forward to meeting as many of you as possible throughout the year!

NBA Beef Expo	28th May 2022	Darlington, Co Durham
NSA ScotSheep	1st June 2022	Tealing, Dundee
Royal Highland Show	23rd – 26th June 2022	Ingliston, Edinburgh
Great Yorkshire Show	12th – 15th July 2022	Harrogate, North Yorkshire
Royal Welsh Show	18th – 21st July 2022	Builth Wells, Powys
NSA Sheep Event	27th July 2022	Malvern, Worcestershire
Westmorland County Show	TBC (September 2022)	Milnthorpe, Cumbria
Borderway Agri-Expo	TBC (October 2022)	Carlisle, Cumbria
AgriFest South West	TBC (November 2022)	Exeter, Devon

Meet the Team



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Health Schemes office team, based in St Boswells:
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